REMARKS

The Examiner divided the claims into five distinct groups on the basis that the claims do not relate to a single general inventive concept. The Examiner cited the reference by Tang et al. (US 5,296,627) and founded the restriction requirement on the grounds that the reference discloses a process for preparing an aqueous emulsion that anticipates the process recited in instant claim 1. In particular, the Examiner pointed to Example 14 of the reference as relating to used of a terminally ethylenically unsaturated poly(alkyleneoxy) surfactant to polymerize ethylenically unsaturated monomers in an emulsion.

Applicant respectfully submits that the cited reference by Tang et al., and particularly Example 14 of the reference, does not anticipate claim 1 of the present application, for at least the following.

Claim 1 of the present application specifies formation of a nanoporous thermosensitive polymer by polymerization of a microemulsion that contains a polymerizable surfactant and a monomer capable of forming a thermosensitive polymer. As indicated in paragraph [0034] of the application as originally filed, the term microemulsion refers to a liquid system having a hydrophilic phase and a hydrophobic phase, with equilibrium domain sizes typically on the order of 1 to 100 nm.

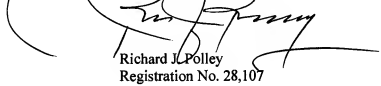
In contrast, as originally stated by the Examiner, the polymerization of Example 14 of Tang et al. is performed in an emulsion (see column 14, lines 7 to 12 of the Tang et al. reference and description of a stable emulsion), rather than a microemulsion as specified by claim 1 of the present invention. Example 14 of Tang et al. describes formation of a latex and not a polymer, as indicated in the second last sentence of the Example. The term latex is used to describe a dispersion of solid particles within a liquid phase, and thus refers to an emulsion. Example 14 of Tang et al. describes the latex as containing 44.6% by weight solids.

Furthermore, Example 14 of Tang et al. describes the use of monomers ethyl acrylate, n-butyl acrylate, acrylic acid and N-methylolacrylamide. These monomers are not capable of forming a thermosensitive polymer.

Thus, Applicant submits that the Tang et al. reference, and particularly Example 14 as relied on by the Examiner, does not disclose or describe polymerization of a microemulsion, the use of monomers capable of forming a thermosensitive polymer, nor a nanoporous, thermosensitive polymer. Accordingly, the Tang et al. reference cannot anticipate claim 1 of the present application.

Based on the foregoing, Applicant submits that claims 1 to 45 of the present application are unified by a single general inventive concept and Applicant requests search and examination of all of claims 1 to 45 in the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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